



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

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MONITORING RESULTS FROM MASON CITY FIRE SHOW ELEVATED PARTICULATES

MASON CITY – Stationary air quality monitors for particulate matter showed that there were elevated levels of microscopic soots and aerosols released following a salvage yard fire in Mason City that occurred on July 26.

On July 26, ongoing air quality monitors in Mason City recorded elevated levels of particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter. That is the size that is likely to lodge in people's lungs. The elderly, children and people with impaired respiratory systems are most likely to experience symptoms after exposure.

Continuous air quality monitoring is conducted in Mason City to monitor air quality associated with two cement plants. The spikes in the particulate matter may be due in part to the salvage yard fire based on wind directions at the time.

“Citizens should understand that we do not expect acute health affects from this level, however this was a serious air quality incident,” said Jeff Vansteenburgh, supervisor of the Mason City DNR field office. “Large amounts of particulate matter and byproducts of incomplete combustion were released into the air during the fire.”

Vansteenburgh added that the day of the fire, toxins were not detected with the available testing equipment. “However, we didn’t have the capacity to monitor everything produced,” he said. The Hazmat team tested for hydrogen sulfide, benzene, chlorine, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide. Oxygen levels downwind of the fire were found to be normal.

When rubber and plastic are burned, they produce black oily smoke that contains cancer-causing chemicals, acids, carbon monoxide, zinc, and lead. Other products of incomplete combustion include assorted hydrocarbons, even dioxin and furans. Plastic can also contain chlorine compounds and metals such as cadmium and chromium.

“Though there was no cause for panic,” Vansteenburgh said, “precautions need to be taken during any fire, just as we recommended during the height of this one. Once the plume has dissipated, the levels of particulates drops.

“Stay out of the smoke plume. Close windows and doors, reduce outside air entering the structure,” he said. “People should also avoid open burning and adhere to rules, even for small fires, for the benefit of air quality in our local area, statewide and throughout the world.”

The air sampling was conducted the morning of July 26 by Mason City Hazmat at North Taft Avenue, the North Iowa Fairgrounds, Mercy Campus West and Curries Manufacturing in Mason City, the county line road east of U.S. Highway 65 in Manly and in the city of Plymouth.

The fire broke out at the Behr Salvage yard and involved firefighters from at least five departments. An estimated 6,000 to 8,000 crushed cars were involved.

For more information, contact Jeff Vansteenburgh at (641) 424-4073.

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DNR OFFERS COST-EFFECTIVE OPTIONS TO ILLEGAL OPENING BURNING OF TRADE WASTES

DES MOINES – Iowa’s open burning regulations have been in effect for more than 35 years, yet the Iowa DNR still regularly encounters violations by both individuals and businesses. The burning of trade waste – or waste from businesses, farmers, industries and others – continues to be a problem.

“Iowa’s environmental regulations have never allowed trade wastes to be burned, but it does not appear that we have witnessed a decrease in violations over the years,” said Dan Stipe, supervisor of the DNR Atlantic field office.

In 2005, the DNR collected \$39,680 in penalties for violations of open burning regulations. In addition, the DNR issued 243 Notices of Violation (NOVs) for air quality related incidents. An NOV lets people know what is required under the law and lists what they need to do to be in compliance.

“The DNR will be working to curtail the open burning of trade wastes,” said Stipe. “Violators of Iowa’s open burning law could face up to a \$10,000 fine. In the event a business was unaware of the law, now would be the time to stop.”

Open burning releases particulate matter, a generic term used to describe microscopic sized soots and aerosols. Because small particles can penetrate the deepest parts of the lungs, open burning increases the likelihood of symptoms in sensitive individuals, including children, the elderly and those with heart and lung disease.

“All types of open burning release air pollution, but we hold businesses to a higher standard because they are more likely to cause greater emissions than what we might see in a residential burn,” said Christine Paulson, senior environmental specialist for the DNR’s Air Quality Bureau. “Employees and neighboring citizens are all exposed to what is burned.”

Some businesses choose to burn or dump their waste because of economics. They decide to “save money” by not paying landfill fees or finding other cost-effective means of disposal.

“It’s really an issue of proper solid waste management,” said Jeff Geerts, program planner with the DNR’s Energy and Waste Management Bureau. “Along with open burning, we see a lot of illegal dumping. Many more environmentally and even economically sound options exist.”

The DNR has several resources available for businesses searching for alternative waste disposal methods. The Iowa Waste Exchange (IWE) is just one example.

The IWE is a confidential, non-regulatory program that works with businesses and others to assess types and amounts of wastes. Outreach specialists can then match available materials with other companies looking for them for possible reuse or recycling options.

The Iowa Waste Exchange has matched more than 900,000 tons of material in the past 15 years. More information about using the Iowa Waste Exchange can be found at <http://www.iowalifechanging.com/business/exchange.html>.

Other resources include the DNR’s Pollution Prevention Services program that can assist with the improvement of a manufacturing process to reduce waste from being generated in the first place. Companies can apply for forgivable, no interest or low interest loans through the DNR’s Solid Waste Alternatives Program (SWAP). Businesses are also encouraged to contact the Iowa Waste Reduction Center in Cedar Falls for environmental compliance assistance and local recycling and solid waste officials.

To report open burning of trade waste, contact your local DNR field office. The offices are listed below:

Manchester: (563) 927-2640
Mason City: (641) 424-4073
Spencer: (712) 262-4177
Atlantic: (712) 243-1934
Des Moines: (515) 725-0268

Washington: (319) 653-2135.

A map showing the regions, addresses and phone numbers of the six DNR field offices is also available at www.iowadnr.gov/fo/fomap.html.

For more information about safe and legal alternatives to open burning, contact Dan Stipe with the Iowa DNR at (712) 243-1934 or dan.stipe@dnr.state.ia.us. For information on Iowa's air quality rules for open burning, contact Christine Paulson at (515) 242-5154 or christine.paulson@dnr.state.ia.us. For more information about the Iowa Waste Exchange, contact Matt Rasmussen at 515-242-4906 or by email at Matt.Rasmussen@iowalifechanging.com.

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DNR ASKS ANIMAL CONFINEMENT PRODUCERS TO USE NEWER MMP AND CONSTRUCTION FORMS BY SEPTEMBER

DES MOINES – The DNR is asking producers with confinement feeding operations to use three DNR forms that were updated in the spring of 2006, instead of their older versions.

“Many people simply make a copy of the older versions of the forms and use them repeatedly,” said Cindy Martens, an environmental specialist from the Spencer DNR field office. “The problem with that is that we are constantly trying to improve the forms to make them more user friendly and to make it easier to find all the information that we need.”

Martens said that confinement producers should use the latest 2006 versions of the DNR’s manure management plan form, the construction permit application and the construction design statement.

“We’d like to encourage producers and consultants to check the web each time they prepare a form,” she said. “If they always download or check for the latest version, they should have the right forms.”

The DNR will no longer be accepting outdated forms after Sept 1. Instead, producers who use outdated forms after that date will be asked to resubmit the information on the newer forms. This could delay their construction projects or manure application.

Martens also said that the DNR wants to be clear about the supporting information required for a new (original) manure management plan. Manure management plans for construction, expansion or modification of an operation must include the written manure agreements. Producers must also submit the Iowa Phosphorus Index for each field in the plan and the soil loss equations that support each of the Phosphorus Index calculations.

Producers can find the latest versions of the forms on the DNR Web site at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/afo/forms.html>.

They can also get current forms from any of the DNR regional field offices. The offices are listed below:

Manchester: (563) 927-2640
Mason City: (641) 424-4073
Spencer: (712) 262-4177
Atlantic: (712) 243-1934
Des Moines: (515) 725-0268
Washington: (319) 653-2135.

For more information on manure management plans or non-permitted sites, contact Cindy Martens at (712) 262-4177. For permitted sites, contact Sara Smith (515) 242-5521.

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CITY OF WATERLOO BYPASS

WATERLOO -- About 2,400 gallons of untreated waste water overflowed in a remote area of Waterloo on Monday.

City workers discovered the leakage on Monday and traced it to an obstruction in a sewer line. The obstruction was removed on Monday. The waste water did not reach a stream or lake.

Repairs continued on Tuesday to fix a fracture in the line.

The DNR has issued a notice of violation (NOV) to the city for failing to report the bypass within 12 hours. Bypasses due to mechanical failures must be reported to the DNR within 12 hours of their onset or discovery.

Bypasses due to heavy rainfall or precipitation can be reported to the DNR on the monthly operating reports.

For more information, contact Sue Miller at the Manchester DNR field office, at (563) 927-2640.

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DNR ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

DES MOINES — The DNR took the following enforcement actions in June and July 2006, unless otherwise noted. The following are only briefs; please contact Jessie Brown of the DNR for more information at (515) 281-5131.

Administrative Orders

Responsible parties have 30 days to appeal the order or 60 days to pay the penalty.

- Harvey Driesen, of Rock Valley, was ordered to submit an updated manure management plan (MMP) and annual compliance fee, and to pay a \$3,000 penalty. The order is in regard to failure to submit an MMP and compliance fee for a site in Sioux County.

Consent Orders

A consent order is issued in settlement of an administrative order or as an alternative to issuing an administrative order. A consent order indicates that the DNR has voluntarily entered into a legally enforceable agreement with the other party.

- The Jones County Board of Supervisors agreed in a consent order to a compliance schedule for improvements to the Edinburgh Manor wastewater treatment facility, and to pay stipulated penalties in the case the schedule is not met.
- The United States Gypsum Company, of Fort Dodge, agreed in a consent order to make stipulated improvements to its facility, submit maintenance plans to the DNR and pay a \$10,000 penalty. The order is in regard to air quality violations.
- The City of Fairfield agreed in a consent order to pay a \$6,750 penalty. The order is in regard to underground storage tank violations.
- Rex L. Wagener, dba Star Video, of Storm Lake, agreed in a consent order to permanently and properly close petroleum underground storage tanks at a site in Storm Lake and pay a \$6,000 penalty. This order was agreed upon in May.
- Troy Mills Sanitary District, of Troy Mills, agreed in a consent order to comply with its National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, to comply with a schedule for sewer system improvements and to pay stipulated penalties in the event that the schedule is not met. The consent order is in regard to wastewater violations.
- Fairwinds Corporation, Inc. d/b/a EnviroBate Management Services, of Urbandale, agreed in an amendment to a 2004 administrative order to pay a \$6,000 penalty. This amends a 2004 administrative order regarding air quality violations. The penalty has been paid.

Withdrawn Orders

The following orders have been withdrawn by the DNR:

- Bruce and Jill Rewoldt of Eldora: A 2006 administrative order regarding animal feeding operation violations is rescinded.

For more information, contact Jessie Brown at (515) 281-5131.